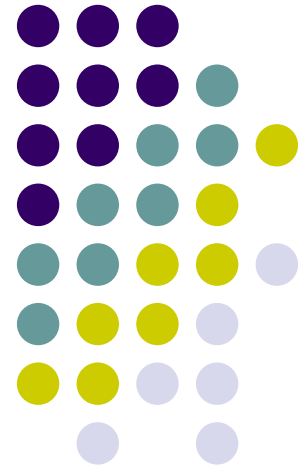


# WELCOME TO WILMINGTON VAMC

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New Patient Orientation  
to VA Services  
via the Internet





# Course Outline

- I. Director's Message
- II. Introduction to the VA and Wilmington VA Medical Center and its Clinic Services
- III. Orientation to Primary Care and CBOCs
- IV. Orientation to Pharmacy Benefits
- V. Specialty Clinics and Services
- VI. Social Work Services
- VII. Behavioral Health Services
- VIII. The Patient Advocate



# Course Outline

- IX. Other Outpatient Services
- X. Updating Your Personal Information
- XI. VA Priority Groups and Level of Care
- XII. Medical Benefits Package and Co-pays
- XIII. The VA Regional Office and Veterans Benefits
- XIV. Compensation and Pension Claims Process

*Dear Veteran,*

*Welcome to the Wilmington VA Medical Center (VAMC) where our staff are committed to providing you with top quality care and service. We are glad to have this chance to serve you.*

*Please tell us what you think about the care you receive. We use your comments to help improve the care we give to all veterans.*

*Healthcare services offered by the VAMC include an acute hospital, a 60 bed Nursing Home Care Unit, and five Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). We are affiliated with the Jefferson University Medical School, the University of Maryland, the University of Delaware, and several other schools to provide educational opportunities for students of medicine, nursing, social work, and other healthcare professions.*

*We pride ourselves in being among the highest rated VA facilities for patient satisfaction in the nation and in providing individual, quality care to each veteran we serve.*

**CHARLES M. DORMAN, FACHE**  
Director





## II. Why choose the VA?

- The VA wants to be your provider of choice.
- We envision ourselves as a recognized leader in providing excellence in the continuum of care.
- We have a commitment to excellence.



# Putting Veterans First



- The VA pledges to:
  - Treat you with courtesy, compassion, and respect at all times.
  - Communicate with you accurately, completely and clearly.
  - Provide timely service to you.
  - Make our services accessible to you.
  - Fully answer your questions, concerns and complaints.



# Mission Statement

- VHA mission is to honor veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves your health and well-being.
- Our vision is to be (1) a patient-centered, integrated health care organization for veterans providing excellence in health care, research, and education; (2) an organization where people choose to work; and (3) an active community partner and a backup for national emergencies.

# The Wilmington VAMC



- Wilmington VA currently serves almost 26,000 veterans.
- Our Hospital and CBOCs had 187,000 outpatient visits and over 2,800 admissions in 2007.
- Our patient satisfaction scores are among the highest in our VISN (Veterans Integrated Service Network).

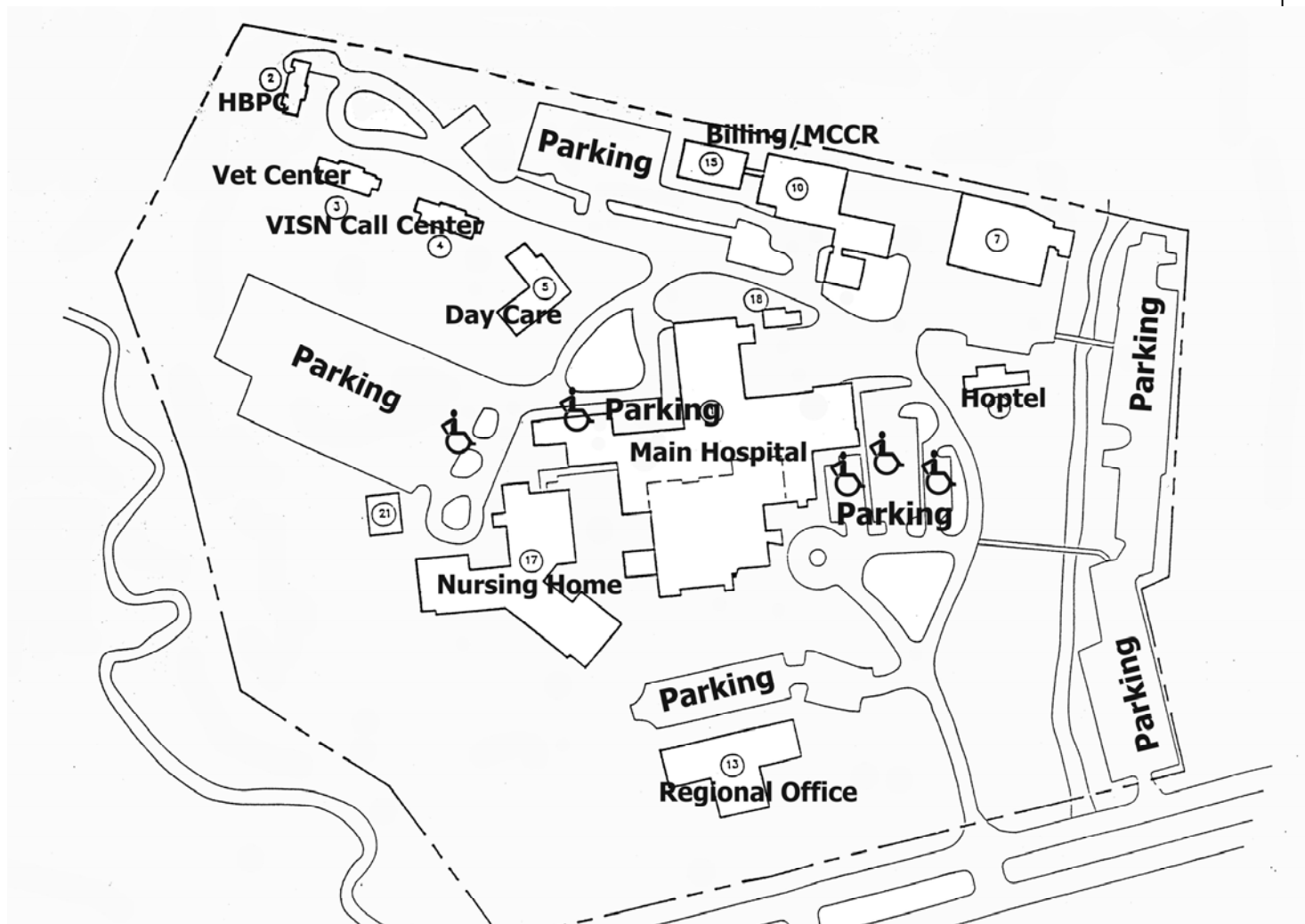


# The Wilmington VAMC



- The Wilmington VA is one of ten medical centers in VISN 4, covering parts of PA, NJ, DE, OH, and WV.
- It is comprised of a 60 bed acute care hospital and 60 bed Nursing Home Care unit.
- The Wilmington VAMC is comprised of the main hospital campus and Community Based Outpatient Centers located in Vineland, Ventnor, and Cape May, New Jersey. We also have CBOCs in Dover and Georgetown, Delaware.
- The Regional Office of the Veterans Benefit Administration is located on our campus.

# Campus Map



# III. What is Primary Care?



- Primary Care provides coordinated management of all your medical problems.
- You are assigned to one medical provider and one team.
- Primary Care offers collaboration with other health specialists when needed.
- Primary Care has a record of delivering high quality health care to our patients.

# Primary Care Phone Numbers



- MAIN HOSPITAL NUMBER:

1-800-461-8262 (Toll Free) 302-994-2511 (Wilmington)

- Team A Ext. 5451
- Team B Ext. 5452
- Team C Ext. 5453
- Teams D & E Ext. 5454
- Vineland Ext. 6500
- Ventnor Ext. 2800
- Cape May Ext. 2850
- Dover Ext. 2400
- Georgetown Ext. 2300

# How does Primary Care Clinic Work?

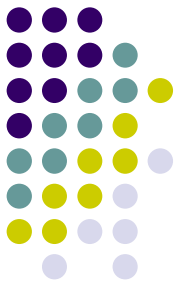


- A Team approach is used
- Team members involved in your care include:
  - Primary Care Provider
  - Nurses
  - Administrative Support Staff
  - Social Workers



# Types of Care

- Provider Appointment Clinic – where you meet with your doctor or nurse practitioner
- Nurse Clinic – where a nurse sees you and possibly arranges for follow on care with your Primary Care Provider (PCP)
- Telephone Advice – allows you to call and speak with a team member or VA nurse about your health concerns.



# Provider Appointment Clinic

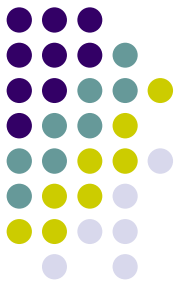
- First Visit to meet with your Provider
  - **What you should bring with you**
    - office records from ALL outside practitioners for the past 12 months
    - medications [in original bottles] including over-the-counter medicines
    - copies of recent labs and diagnostic tests from outside the VA providers



# First Visit (Continued)

- First Visit to meet with your Provider
  - **What you should bring with you**
    - VA Identification Card or Photo ID
    - Health insurance/Medicare card
    - Prescriptions for current medications





# Check-In

- ***It is very important that you check in at least 20 minutes before your scheduled provider appointment!***
- This allows the clinic staff to:
  - Verify your personal information on file
  - The nurse to conduct health surveys and
  - Perform prevention screenings



# Check-In

- Clinic visits are timed. Please make every effort to arrive early so that we may service all of our veterans in a timely fashion.
- If you arrive late, you may be asked to reschedule or wait for a cancellation.
- ***Remember to allow time for parking and your visit with the nurse!***

# What to expect during your first Provider Appointment Visit



- Your PCP can be a Physician or Nurse Practitioner who will:
  - Conduct a history and physical
  - Review your current medicines – order new meds
  - Review past diagnostic lab or other medical tests
  - Plan your future care



# Dual Care

- Dual Care is when a veteran chooses to receive health care from a VA provider and a non-VA provider at the same time.
- Your VA provider has final authority and responsibility on your VA care and medications as long as you are in the VA system.



# Dual Care

- Your responsibilities:
  - Update your VA provider and non VA providers on any changes in your health or medication at each visit.
  - Give your VA primary care provider (PCP) copies of medical records from all non-VA providers.



# Dual Care

- Please make arrangements to obtain your medical records. In most cases, a signed release is needed.
- Release of Information is available to help you with the process.
  - located on 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Ext. 5242
  - signed release form available



# Team Checkout Desk

- Where you go to schedule future appointments:
  - Call between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Monday through Friday (except Federal Holidays)  
1-800-461-8262 (Toll Free) or 302-994-2511 (Local)
  - Cape May Ext. 2850
  - Ventnor Ext. 2800
  - Vineland Ext. 6500
  - Georgetown Ext. 2300
  - Dover Ext. 2400
  - Team A Ext. 5451
  - Team B Ext. 5452
  - Team C Ext. 5453
  - Teams D & E Ext. 5454

# Check Out



- Advanced Clinic Access process
  - YOU and your provider decide when you need to be seen.
  - This process allows you to schedule appointments at times that meet YOUR needs.
  - It also lets you coordinate multiple visits on the same day which can save you money if you must make co-payments for VA care.



# Cancelling Appointments



- PLEASE CALL
  - allows provider to service another patient in the event that you cannot make your appointment.
  - You have the option to cancel your appointment when you get the automated telephone reminder. Please listen to the menu until the end of the message.
  - Please, DON'T BE A NO SHOW!



# Nurse Clinic

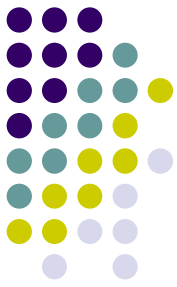
- Where you go for prevention care
  - BP checks
  - Immunizations
  - Teaching
  - Screening for various diseases
- Is used for evaluation of walk-in patients
  - **CALL FIRST**
  - providers will see patients with *urgent problems* the same day



# Telephone Advice

- If you have a problem and think you need to come to the Medical Center or CBOC, **call your team nurse first.** The nurse can:
  - possibly help you with your problem over the phone
  - make a same day appointment if needed
  - make a future appointment if needed

# Advice Line



- Speak to a VA nurse
- Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Provides medical advice between visits
- 1-800-877-6976





# IV. Pharmacy Orientation

Wilmington VAMC  
Wilmington, DE

# VA Pharmacy Benefit



- The main goal of the VA pharmacy benefit is to provide the veteran with the highest quality drug therapy:
  - Rational use of medication
  - Appropriate use of medication
- The VA follows a national “formulary” that is reviewed annually for nationwide use.
- A formulary is a list of drugs which the VA uses as primary drug therapy for most patients.

# VA Pharmacy Benefit



- Your VA provider will review your medications and will recommend VA formulary medications where appropriate.
- The VA formulary medication should provide the same or better results as medications prescribed to you in the community which are not on the VA formulary.
- If the VA formulary does not contain a medication for which your VA provider deems necessary, he/she may make a special request for it.

# VA Pharmacy Benefit



- This special request may require additional information.
- The request may not be approved if there is a suitable formulary alternative available, or if the request does not meet national VA standards of appropriate use.
- Discuss formulary issues with your VA provider, not the Pharmacy Service.



# VA Pharmacy Benefit



- If you are receiving care from a private physician and are coming to the VA primarily for medications, please understand that your VA provider may not provide every medication (or substitute) unless they have enough medical information to support the use of a medication.
- When your VA provider issues a prescription, they are taking on the medical responsibility for that prescription.

# VA Pharmacy Operations

- Location: Main Hospital Building - First Floor
- Hours of Operation:
  - Monday 8:00am – 5:00pm
  - Tuesday 8:00am – 5:00pm
  - Wednesday 8:00am – 6:00pm
  - Thursday 8:00am – 5:00pm
  - Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm
  - Closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays



# Obtaining your Prescriptions

- You may **ONLY** pick-up **NEW** prescriptions at the pharmacy window
- Refills **MUST** be mailed - the pharmacy window is not for regular refills
- When your prescription is ready to be picked up, your name will display on TV monitor in the outpatient pharmacy waiting room or cafeteria
- You must provide identification (VA ID card or license) when picking up prescriptions



# Obtaining your Prescriptions

- DO NOT leave the outpatient pharmacy area until you have checked all your medications
- Make sure you have received all your requested medications – sometimes medications will be packaged in multiple bags
- Make sure all the medications have your name on the labels
- Ask for additional information from a pharmacist if you don't understand the correct use of a medication



# Obtaining your Prescriptions

- The VA Pharmacy Service lists the generic name on the prescription label for all medications, regardless if a branded medication or a generic medication is used.
- This prevents confusion, as some drugs have several brand names, but all distinct drugs only have one generic name.



# Obtaining your Prescriptions

- If you requested for your new medications to be mailed, you do not have to stop by the outpatient pharmacy, unless you need to speak with a pharmacist
- Expect your medication to be mailed to you within 7 to 10 days
- Your medications may be mailed from a Centralized Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP)
- Your medications may arrive in multiple packages
- You should contact this medical center with prescription questions and problems

# Requesting Refills

- Refills will NOT be sent automatically to you – need to be requested at least 10 days prior to prevent running out of medication
- Refills may be requested 3 ways:
  - Call anytime (see refill brochure)—EASY and FREE!
  - By computer using the VA's MyHealth\_eVet Website: [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) (you must be a registered VA patient).
  - Mail in your refill request (slips and/or form)



# Medication Co-payment

- \$8.00 per medication for each 30-day or less supply of medication (a 90 day supply request will cost 3 times \$8.00 or \$24.00)
  - This includes charging for Over the Counter (OTC) medicines (such as aspirin, laxatives, vitamins, cough syrup). This is NOT cost effective for you and may be available for much less at discount stores.
  - There is no co-payment charged for supply items such as syringes. However, you are billed for select items such as AccuChek test strips.



# Medication Co-payment



- You may not be charged a co-payment when:
  - If your income is below a certain level
  - If a medication is prescribed for a service connected condition
  - If rated at 50% or greater service connected

# V. Specialty Clinics at The Wilmington VA



- Arthritis
- Audiology
- Behavioral Health Services
- Cardiology
- Dental
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- ENT
- GI
- GU
- Hematology-Oncology
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology/Optometry
- Orthopedics [select cases]
- Pain Mgt
- Podiatry
- Pulmonary
- Renal
- Surgery
- Physical and Rehab Med.
- Women's Health

# Specialty Clinics



- Your PCP will request a specialist consult.
- As a general rule, consults are reviewed within 24 hours. You should receive a letter in about 10 days notifying you of your specialist appointment date.
- Please call your primary care team if you do not receive your appointment letter in two weeks!
- Service connected veterans are given first priority scheduling.
- Specialist appointments are usually scheduled within 30 days.



# Specialty Clinics

- If there is a need to be seen at a specialty clinic that is not available at this campus, you will be referred to the Philadelphia VA or to a VA authorized facility.
- Please remember to call if you need to cancel a specialist appointment at another facility.
- Inter-facility transfers are handled by the Patient Transfer Office. Your provider will write the transfer request to assist with your travel.

# Referrals for the Philadelphia VA Medical Center



Certain types of special conditions will be seen outside the Wilmington VAMC at Philadelphia

Select Orthopedics conditions/surgeries

- Radiation Therapy
- Select Ear-Nose-Throat surgeries
- Cardiac Surgery
- Neurosurgery [currently go to the Manhattan, NY VA Medical Center]



## VI. Social Work Services

Our social workers can assist you with:

- Assessment and referral for long term care services
- Assistance with Advance Directives
- Help if you think someone is taking advantage of you or if you feel mistreated in a relationship
- Information and Referral to community resources so that you can continue to live in your own home
- Help with referrals for hospice and palliative care
- Help with financial, housing, employment, or transportation problems
- Help in applying for benefits from the VA, Social Security and other government and community programs



# Social Work Services

- To see a Social Worker you can make an appointment by:
  - Getting a consult from your primary care provider
  - Telephone call a request directly to a social worker
  - Same day visit request if the social worker is available

## VII. Out-Patient Services



- BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES:
- New **Compensative Work Therapy/Supportive Employment**, CWT/SE
- Improved **Substance Abuse Treatment**, SAT programming (which includes **Smoking Cessation**)
- Formal **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**, PTSD, **Military Sexual Trauma**, MST programming
- Formal **Outreach to recently returning Veterans**, OIF/OEF programming
- Additional **Programming to Homeless Veterans** and **Veterans with Serious Mental Illness**, HCHV and SMI programming



## VIII. PATIENT ADVOCATE/COMPLAINT PROCESS



All patients have rights and responsibilities that are posted throughout the Medical Center and are available in written form.

We encourage you to be an active participant in your healthcare. Please feel free to ask questions and to express concerns that you may have with the members of your treatment team or other departments that provide service.

The Patient Advocate is available to assist with questions or concerns that cannot be resolved within those areas.



## The Patient Advocate

**Kay Jamison**, the Hospital Patient Advocate,  
can be reached at

(302) 633-5556 or  
1(800) 461-8262, Ext. 5556.

Her office is located in the main Hospital  
Building – near the Front Lobby, 1st floor,  
Room 1174.



## IX. Other Out-Patient Services

- Women's Veterans Coordinator
- Home Tele-Health
- Diabetes Education
- Nutrition Consultations
- Smoking Cessation Counseling
- **Patient Education Resource Center** – Location of the MyHealtheVet computer and printer for veteran use.

Room 1072 – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the hospital.

- MHV computers veterans can use at the CBOCs



# Other Out-Patient Services

- Other Benefits\*\*
  - Prosthetics and durable medical equipment supplies
  - Respite and Long Term Care available through the Community Living Center (nursing home)
  - Home care available through the Home Base Primary Care unit

\*\*available only if eligibility criteria is met



## Other Out-Patient Services

- **MOVE! (Managing Obesity for Veterans Everywhere!) Weight Management Program**
- National VA program designed to help veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health.
- **Healthier US Veterans** is another VA program designed to promote healthier living.

For more information visit:

[www.move.med.va.gov](http://www.move.med.va.gov)

# Transportation to/from Wilmington



- Campus Parking Lot Shuttle – provides short rides to the main hospital for visitors with disabilities (not available everyday)
- DAV Shuttles from Lower Delaware and NJ
- VANS to and from the Wilmington VAMC
  - Philadelphia Shuttle twice daily
  - Ventnor Van with a stop at Vineland
- The Travel Desk Clerk, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, can assist you with more information.

## X. Updating Your Personal and Financial Information



Now that you are enrolled in the VA healthcare system, one of your major responsibilities and most important things that you need to do, as a patient, will be to keep the VA aware of any **CHANGES** in your personal and financial information.

Every time you check-in for an appointment, our clerical staff will be asking you to verify some of your information.



## Address

Appointment Letters

Appointment Cancellation Notices

Important Notices sent from the VA

Billing Statements

## Phone numbers

Appointment Reminders

Clinic Cancellation Notices





## **Next Of Kin Information**

It is of vital importance that we know whom to contact in the event that something happens to you while you are here.

This is the person or persons whom you want us to call in an emergency situation.

## **Employer/phone changes**

Again, this is information we use to contact you in the event that your appointment needs to be cancelled and/or rescheduled.

## Financial Information



Veterans in certain Priority Groups may be exempt from having to make co-payments for Medications and/or some healthcare visits.

These veterans are required to provide the VA with annual updates of their Financial Information.

## Anniversary Date

The day that you were enrolled in our HealthCare system becomes the anniversary date for your update requirement.

**30-60 days before your Anniversary Date, our Financial Update section will mail you an update form (10-10EZR).**

**Please fill out the form and mail it back promptly.**

## What happens if you don't update your Financial Information by the Anniversary Date?



Failure to return the Financial Update form, in a timely manner, could result in having your benefits temporarily discontinued:

- You will start getting billed for appointments or medications that you normally wouldn't be billed for, and
- May cause some delay in the scheduling of future appointments.

**So, it is very important that you return the form promptly.**

# Insurance Information



**Please bring your private insurance card with you and present it to the Check-in clerk.**

By law, VA is allowed to bill third party insurance carriers for treatment provided to you for non-service connected conditions (NSC). This means VA can bill your insurance company for certain care. This includes policies held by you, your spouse or guardian. Neither VA nor the patient can bill Medicare; however, VA can bill supplemental policies you hold.



## Insurance Information

Reimbursements received from insurance carriers can be used to reduce or eliminate your co-payment debt.

When the insurance carrier does not reimburse VA for the services provided, **you are responsible for co-pay amounts. The unpaid co-payment balance remains your payment responsibility.**

Monies collected from co-payments and insurance companies allow us to provide care to more veterans.

# How Do I Update My Information?



- **In person.. when you check-in/check-out of one of your visits you will be asked every time you visit us about any changes.**
- **By phone ... call YOUR TEAM phone number. (You can't change or update Financial information over the phone - It requires a new form and your signature.)**
- **By Mail...VA Form 10-10EZR, Health Benefits Renewal (these are mailed prior to your anniversary date and are also available at the main Outpatient Center on the 1st floor.)**



## **XI. VA Priority Groups and Care**

All veterans are enrolled and placed into 1 of 8 Priority Groups. Each Priority Group is distinguished by the degree or Service Connectivity of a veteran's disability.

**Priority Group 1**, for instance, are veterans who are suffering from severe disabilities that limit their ability to work and/or need continued care. They get the most benefits and possibly at no cost to the veteran.



## Priority Groups and Care

**Priority Group 8**, on the other hand, are veterans that are in good to excellent health, are gainfully employed, and don't need extensive healthcare coverage.

They are required to make Co-Payments when they see their PCP, Specialists, and when they receive medications.





## **More.... About VA's medical benefits package**

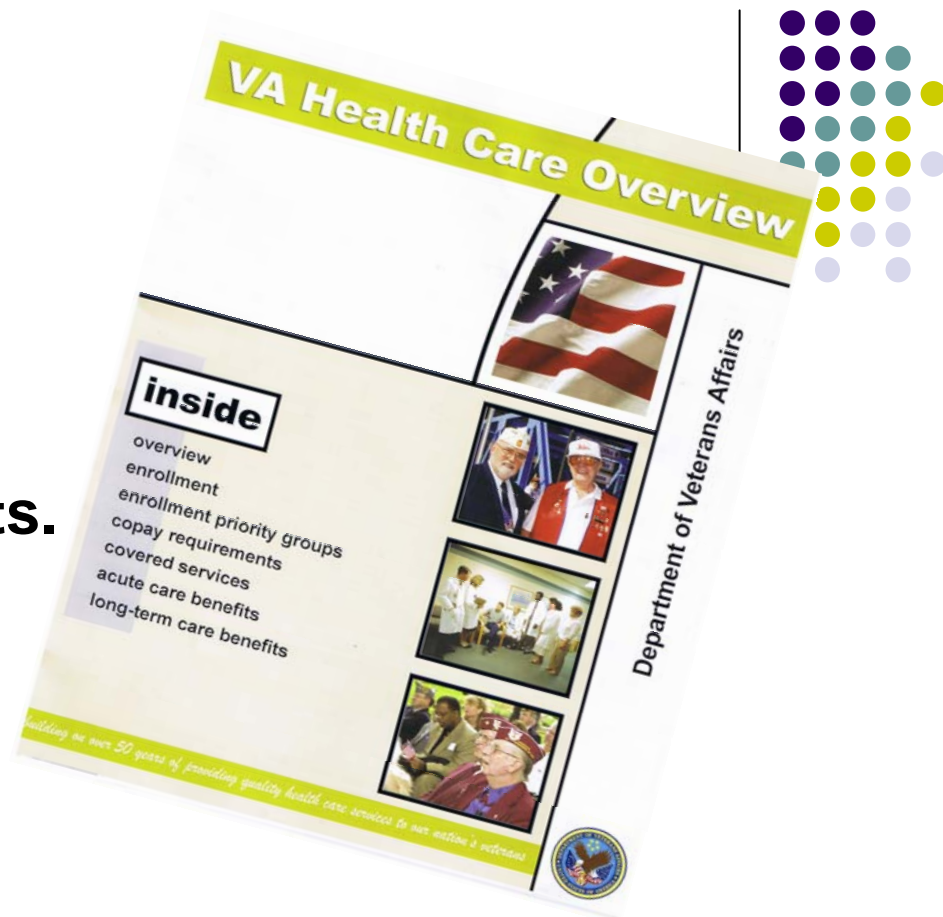
As a veteran of the armed forces and now an outpatient with our Facility, there is a long list of related benefits that are a part of the outpatient “package” that you may qualify for.

## **Health Care Overview**

**This booklet has more information about benefits.**

**Look through it for an explanation about the Priority Group that YOU have been assigned to.**

**And please call us or stop by our Eligibility station anytime.**



## **XII. Medical Benefits and Co-pay Information**



- **Basic Care Services—services provided by a primary care clinician..... \$15/visit**
- **Specialty Care Services—services provided by a clinical specialist such as surgeon, radiologist, audiologist, optometrist, cardiologist, and specialty tests such as magnetic resonance imagery (MRI), computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan, and nuclear medicine studies .....\$50/visit**



- **\*Co-payment amount is limited to a single charge per visit regardless of the number of health care providers seen in a single day.**
- **The co-payment amount is based on the highest level of service received.**
- **There is no co-payment requirement for preventive care services such as screenings and immunizations.**



## Medications Co-pays

- Prescriptions provided for treatment of non-service-connected conditions is \$8/per 30 day supply effective January 1, 2008. This rate is subject to change annually.
- The total amount paid by veterans in **Priority Groups 2 through 6** is limited to a \$960 annual cap for medications. This rate is subject to change annually.

# Co-payment Exemptions



- Service-connected veterans rated greater than 50%.
- Medications dispensed for service-connected conditions.
- Veterans who are former POW's.
- Medication for treatment MST.
- Veterans with a low income.
- Medications for certain disabilities or diseases

# Insurance



## IMPORTANT REMINDER!

- The VA benefit is NOT an insurance policy
  - provides coverage for care only at VA facilities
  - does not pay for care at private hospitals
  - private hospitals cannot bill the VA



## **XII. VA Regional Benefits Office**

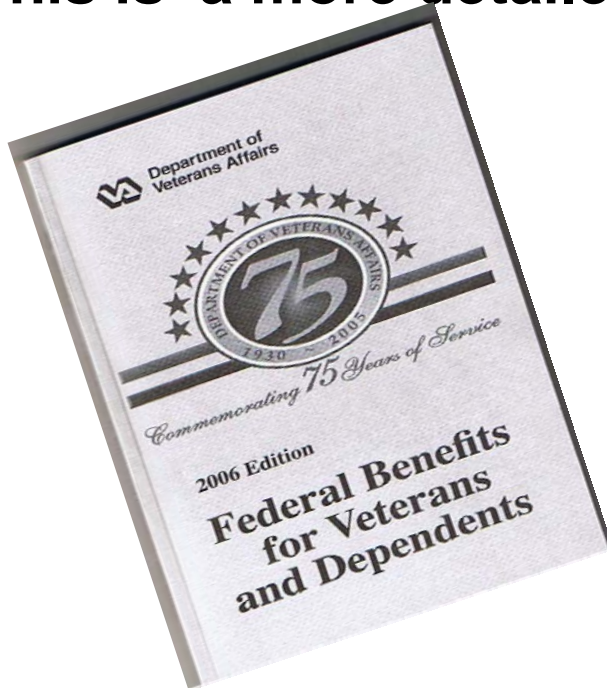
- The Regional VA Benefits Office, located in the white building in front of the hospital, provides veteran information about:
  - Disability Benefits
  - Education and Training
  - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
  - Home Loans
  - Burial Benefits
  - Dependents' and Survivors' Benefits
  - Life Insurance





## **Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents**

**This is a more detailed booklet about benefits. And it has a complete listing all VA Medical Centers in the country, with addresses and phone numbers. The book is available at the Regional Office.**



**Use it as a constant reference to both your Health Care and other Veterans' benefits as they apply to you and your dependents.**



## **XIII. Compensation and Pension Program**

You have been determined to be eligible for healthcare benefits at VA facilities. For most veterans those benefits are limited in scope dependent on the service connection to your condition/disability.

For example – Your PCP may schedule you for a routine eye exam, but you will probably have to purchase the glasses at your own expense at an outside retail store. Or, you may have a hearing exam here but you will have to purchase your hearing aids elsewhere.

If you feel that a certain condition warrants being fully provided by VA, and thereby categorizing that particular condition as service-connected, the Compensation and Pension program may be the avenue for you to explore.



## Compensation and Pension

1. The program is administered by the VA Regional Office and it involves filing a legal CLAIM to have the VA care for the disability or condition that you say was caused by your time in the service.
2. If they find merit in your claim, a VA medical center may be asked to conduct an examination by a specialist.
3. The results of the examination are then sent to the Regional Office for them to make the final decision.

The Medical Center is not involved in the decision, we only conduct the examination. Your Primary Care Physician does not perform the examination.



## Compensation and Pension

The process is complete when the Regional Office declines or renders an opinion and/or an award to change the status of your condition to service-connected.

If the award is granted, any examinations and medications related to the service connected condition will, from then on, be free of charge.

You will need to bring a copy of the Award letter to our Eligibility desk so that we can update your status.

# Patient PHOTO ID CARDS



- Every VA patient must obtain an ID card.
- It is ONLY for VA medical use – not an insurance card
- ID card needs to be shown at all visits.
- Get Your Photo taken at the Wilmington VA. The photo ID card will be mailed to your home address.

Currently, the ID cards are being scanned by kiosk machine located in the clinic areas in order to check in for appointments and Lab work.



# VA Websites

- Department of Veterans Affairs  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- MyHealthVet  
[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)
- Veterans Health Administration  
[www1.va.gov/health/](http://www1.va.gov/health/)
- Veterans Benefits Administration  
[www.vba.va.gov](http://www.vba.va.gov)
- National Cemetery Administration  
[www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)



# **VA HEALTHCARE - VISN 4**

**Billing Call Center**

**1-866-777-1363**

Please call for questions about bills.

# This Ends the Orientation Slide Show



Please direct further questions  
about VA care to your  
primary care team.

**Thank you for watching!**